



Natural Heritage &
Endangered Species
Program

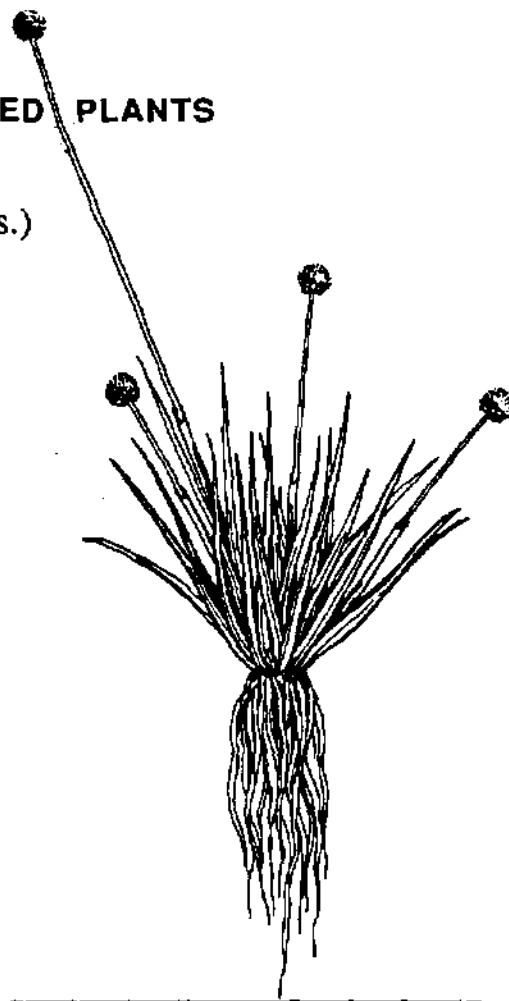
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
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MASSACHUSETTS ENDANGERED PLANTS

ESTUARY PIPEWORT
(*Eriocaulon parkeri* B.L.Robins.)

Description

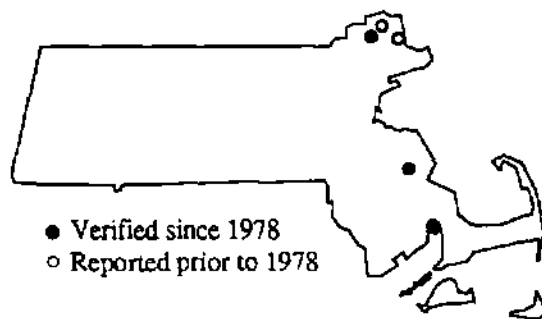
Estuary pipewort is a small, delicate, erect perennial in the Pipewort family (Eriocaulaceae). Its thin, green to purple, basal leaves are grass-like in appearance and grow 2 - 6 cm (0.8 - 2.4 in.) in length. These linear leaves are only 1-2 mm (0.04 - 0.08 in.) wide at their mid-points and taper to a fine end. Estuary pipewort generally has from two to four unbranched scapes (leafless flower stalks). These scapes are straight, obscurely four- or five-angled in cross-section, and 2.5 - 10 cm (1 - 4 in.) long. The small, unisexual, hairless or minutely hairy flowers are clustered in hemispheric or button-like terminal heads, 3 - 6 mm (0.12 - 0.24 in.) in diameter. Each of the two, whitish to yellowish-white petals has a nectar-producing gland just below its tip. Estuary pipewort blooms from late July to late September.



Tiner, R.W. Coastal Wetland Plants of the Northeastern United States. University of Massachusetts Press, 1987.



Documented Range of
Estuary Pipewort



Massachusetts Distribution by Town

Range

The range of estuary pipewort has been documented as extending from New Brunswick and Quebec to Maine, Massachusetts and central New York, and south near the coast to North Carolina.

Similar Species

Hatpins (*Eriocaulon aquaticum*) strongly resembles estuary pipewort. Nevertheless, its scape is five- to seven-sided and usually solitary, and its leaves are longer than those of estuary pipewort--up to 10 cm (4 in.).

Habitat in Massachusetts

Estuary pipewort grows in shallow, tidal freshwater and on the tidal mud flats of rivers. In Massachusetts, habitats include a sandy, mucky, exposed flat of freshwater tidal marsh; a sunny, gravelly, constantly wet, sloping river shore; an exposed, muddy area in a freshwater marsh, where seepage enters; and a cold, boggy, sandy edge of a river, with many cold seeps. Among the plant species associated with estuary pipewort are sweetflag (*Acorus calamus*), wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*), water-smartweed (*Polygonum punctatum*), water-purslane (*Ludwigia palustris*), hedge-hyssop (*Lindernia dubia* var. *inundata*), and various waterworts (*Elatine* spp.), arrow-heads (*Sagittaria* spp.) and cordgrasses (*Spartina* spp.). Rare Massachusetts plants that have been found with estuary pipewort include estuary beggar-ticks (*Bidens hyperborea*).

Population Status

Estuary pipewort is presently listed as "Endangered" in Massachusetts. There are four current stations (discovered or relocated since 1978) and three historical stations (unverified since 1978) in the state. (Two current stations occur in one town, and one historical station is unmappable and does not appear on the state range map.) The species is also considered rare in Connecticut, Maryland, Maine, North Carolina, New Jersey, and Virginia. It was present historically in New York and Pennsylvania.